

NEWSLETTER



December 2018

Adobe Photoshop Elements

As it is that time of year when everyone is buying gifts, I thought a basic review of the latest version of elements was worth a look at. I obtained a copy and made this presentation to the Computer and Technology group of the SIR (Sons In Retirement) in November.

ADOBE PHOTOSHOP ELEMENTS 2019

Before I received my DVD copy of the software, I was reading some reviews and comments on a couple of websites (Amazon etc.) and saw that there were many complaints about downloading and installing the software and problems with the download version in general. In the past Adobe has always simultaneously released a hard copy version (on a DVD) and an "instant" download version for those in a hurry or without a DVD drive on their computer. I had noticed that all the major retailers during the whole of October only had the download version on sale and right now (November 8th) Amazon still is only offering the download version.

The downloaded version of the software got some scathing reviews citing long download times, installation problems such that on Amazon it was only rated 2 stars! I wasn't really concerned about these reviews as I would be installing it on both a very upscale desktop machine and laptop, both with SSD drives lots of memory and very recent processors. I usually receive my copy mid-October but this year it didn't arrive until less than a week ago which surprised me. However, I proceeded to load the program onto my desktop without any problems, and after entering the serial number it seemed to work fine. As I knew I would be giving this presentation using my laptop I went and loaded it onto the machine.

One thing to note when you are loading the software it asks for your Adobe client/membership details, which is no problem for me as I enrolled a long time ago but if you are not a member you are required to join.

After I had loaded the software onto my laptop, I went to open the program but got a screen saying, "Loading Error 1 could not install". I checked my hard drive and the program was

showing there so I shut everything down and tried again. Same result! Now I was getting a little frustrated, so I shut my laptop down and left it overnight. Next morning, I tried again but still an error report. By now I was feeling the pain that the critics whose review I read! I went to the Adobe help site but there was nothing there that remotely resembled my problem, so I went to the telephone help number. A very cheerful young lady asked me how she could help and after I explained my predicament there was a pregnant pause and the she said “I’ll put you in touch with our Elements tech. department, please hold”.

After listening to music for about 5 minutes a canned voice announced, “all our technicians are busy helping other clients but will be with you shortly”. I had the privilege of listening to the music and the canned voice for about an hour before it suddenly stopped and a man’s voice with an Indian accent asked how he could help. He sounded like he was shouting in a cave with an echo following every word, so we had quite a time understanding each other with our differing accents!

This machine already had Elements 12, 14,15 and 18 installed so there was a lot of folders on my “C” drive for Adobe!

After he had quizzed me about the problem we agreed he should take over my computer and so he took charge. I was still on the phone with him and we were also talking via the program where he had me logging on to various sites. To cut a long story short after about an hour the phone line went dead (he apologized for this by text saying it happened all the time and we could continue using typed text if I wouldn’t mind) and I watched as he opened and closed many files and folders with “Adobe” as a heading. He asked that the DVD be in the drive ready for him to access and after a couple of hours he wrote he would try a new install and that took about 30 minutes after which I put in the serial number and bingo Adobe Photoshop Elements 2019 appeared on my screen!

He opened and closed it several times and then proceeded to make sure all my other Adobe software was working and reinstated my malware programs which he had shut down. This whole process took a little over five hours or a total of six plus from when I first called!

Fortunately, Adobe does not charge for assistance like some companies so although it was a long process it was free and it worked!

For those of you who might have difficulties with an Adobe product you should take the following steps:

Go to: <https://www.adobe.com/products/photoshop-elements>



Click on the “Support” sign at the top of the page. On the left-hand side of the next page Sign in (or join if you are not a member) and follow the screens for assistance (for the software, i.e. Photoshop Elements) until you reach the

contact options, choose phone (which is available 24 hours/day, Monday through Friday and you will finally reach the page with the 800 number as shown here:

Hopefully you can get your problem solved quicker than I did!

3. Support - Phone

Change

Please call us at:
800-833-6687

However, let's assume you installed the program without any problems what are the new features compared to version 2018?

- Automated collages and slideshows assist busy users
- Several attractive new collage templates: New support for Apple's HEVC and HEIF compressed-file formats:
- Creative guided edits offer cool special effects
- New Home Screen keeps features easily accessible
- Built-in asset manager
- Downloads and DVD's available for Macs and PCs

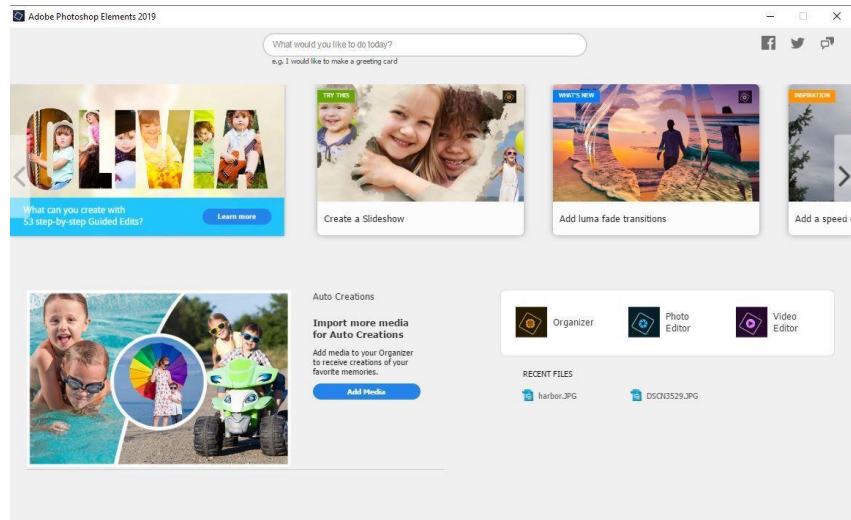
So, what are the drawbacks of this new version?

- Fewer new features in this update than usual
- Organizer has no obvious new features
- The Home Screen cannot be resized
- Must sign in with an Adobe ID to use the program

In this version of Elements, a new Home Screen, which hosts the new Auto Creations feature, accompanies simplified new templates for photo and video collages. The app also adds support for the HEIF (High Efficiency Image File) for the highly compressed mobile-image format Apple now uses in more recent iPhones and iPads. For the first time I can recall, there are no identifiable new features for the Organizer.

Let's open the program and the first thing you will notice is the "new" opening screen.

Across the top are the auto creation features and to the bottom right you have the options for the organizer, photo editor and video editor. You have to give Adobe some credit for tenacity, they push the video editing program in every possible way! One drawback with this is the screen cannot be resized. That isn't to say it is the same size on every screen but it covers about 70% leaving a border all around revealing whatever you have open beneath it, a bit distracting! I will show the various options on the auto creation rolling screen and other options.



The general opinion amongst the writers and critics of computer magazines and websites is that Elements 19 is a good program, very good for manipulating photographs to suit most situations but (and this is a big but, no pun intended) if you already have versions 15 or 18 then you don't get enough new features to really justify spending around \$80 for this version. (If you have a previous version of Photoshop Elements and you order on line from Adobe you can get the upgrade for \$79.99, new users pay \$100).

I have to agree with them, I have every version of Photoshop Elements since the first edition was released in 2001 and although my memory doesn't recall the differences (or improvements) in each release I do not remember any other edition where I thought I was being short changed!

So if you have an older version (13 or before) then go ahead and get this you will be pleased with the product.

Now I would like to introduce you to a couple of other programs for massaging your images at a much lower cost. However just because they are cheaper doesn't mean they don't do a good job, but they don't have the depth of manipulation of Photoshop Elements. My experience with the average computer user is they don't want to create a masterpiece just improve an image that doesn't look like they wanted.

One of the main complaints I hear is that the view they saw from some vantage point is not shown in the photograph they have taken with their smartphone!

One program I use frequently is "AutoHDR". a free program that comes from the UK. The creator, Martin Sykes is a well-known professor at a major university and created this some years ago and has been refining it at regularly. The program had a web address for downloading the program but the provider closed down in August and I haven't found where (if anywhere) they have relocated. However, the "Major Geeks" website has a link to download the program [here](https://www.majorgeeks.com/files/details/autohdr.html) so all is not lost! If the hyperlink is broken try: <https://www.majorgeeks.com/files/details/autohdr.html>

You can choose the settings yourself or just let the program use the default mode. The nice thing about this program is that you can open your original, do an update and save it and then repeat the process using the original again and new settings. I have done this several times on a photograph and then compared all the processed images and chosen the one I liked the best.

Another similar program to AutoHDR is “PhotoBoost” by Abelssoft. You can download a trial version [here](#) or buy it for \$10. It does not have as many adjustment options as AutoHDR but does a credible job of cleaning up a picture and especially reducing haze (good for the smoke we are experiencing at present!).

For a more complete image editing software program try GIMP which is a crossplatform image editor available for GNU/Linux, OS X, Windows and some other operating systems. It is a free program and can be downloaded from many sources including it’s own website, www.gimp.org which will take you to the latest release 2.10.8.

GIMP is a very good image editor and you can access the instruction manual on the website but it is not like the commercial programs in that it does require some computer knowledge. As it is free go ahead and download it and give it a spin, it is a lot of fun to play with.

You can also install a simplified version of “inPixio Photo Editor 8” which allows you to do image manipulation in the program to a limited degree.

The program is a product of the Avanquest group (based in Paris) who also market software for computer protection, website design, accounting etc. They are not well known here but are a popular software company in Europe. You can download a free version of their Photo Editor from their website <https://www.inpixio.com/photo-editor/> which will give you access to the limited program or you can purchase it for the list price of around \$45 but look for the frequent “deals’ offering it for around \$20-\$25. The full blown version including a “Photo Suite” that sells for \$300 (but frequently available for around \$100).

I tried the free version of the photo editor and found it very useful but frustrating when I wanted to do something that was limited to the “premium” or paid version. However, if you like this, the price of \$25 is attractive.

This is the current version of Adobe Photoshop Elements available and some alternative ideas for photos and other images manipulation. Enjoy!

I hope this review helps, have a great Christmas and prosperous new year!

